



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

December 2, 2004

News Release

ICE EMPLOYEES RECOGNIZED BY SECRETARY RIDGE *Secretary's Awards Honor Contributions, Outstanding Performance*

WASHINGTON – Several employees of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) will be recognized by Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge for their exemplary service in advancing the goals of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

The “Secretary’s Awards,” which will be presented annually, were inaugurated this year to recognize the service of those who have demonstrated the highest levels of professional performance and commitment to the DHS mission. This year’s award recipients will be recognized at an awards ceremony in Washington, D.C., on December 2, 2004, at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center Amphitheater.

“ICE is fortunate to have one of the most dedicated and capable work forces in the entire Department and these recognitions reflect that fact,” said Michael J. Garcia, DHS Assistant Secretary for ICE. “The ICE employees recognized in this year’s Secretarial Awards ceremony have gone above and beyond the call of duty, and they have met the highest standards for commitment, professionalism, performance and accomplishment. On behalf of all of ICE, I applaud their contributions to the Homeland Security mission.”

Award recipients from ICE are as follows:

Silver Medal for Meritorious Service

Victor X. Cerda, Acting Director, Office of Detention and Removal Operations (Washington, D.C.)

Mr. Cerda was recognized for his outstanding contributions to ICE and DHS while serving in a series of key senior management positions. Since assuming leadership of DRO, Mr. Cerda has addressed difficult budget and operational challenges with strategic vision, enthusiasm and common sense.

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Secretary's Award for Excellence

Marsha K. Nettles, Chief Counsel, Office of Principal Legal Affairs (Detroit)

Ms. Nettles was recognized for her role in litigating the removal case of Rabih Haddad, the chairman and president of the Global Relief Foundation, a designated terrorist organization. As a result of her efforts, Mr. Haddad was deported from the United States in 2003.

Weapons and Ammunition Commodity Council (WACC), including the following ICE representatives: Thomas L. Trotto and Mark Mullins of the National Firearms and Tactical Training Unit and Soraya Correa of the Office of Procurement.

The WACC, composed of representatives from each of DHS's organizational entities, is responsible for consolidating weapons and ammunition purchases throughout the department. In August, the WACC made multiple awards to provide more than 65,000 handguns to DHS entities over the next five years – a cost-effective arrangement that will ensure consistency across departmental units.

Secretary's Award for Valor

Federal Search Warrant Raid Team consisting of two detectives from the Broward County Sheriff's Office -- Todd Fatta (posthumous award) and Angelo Cedeno – and ICE Special Agent Christopher Harvey (Fort Pierce, Fla.)

While serving a warrant to arrest a dangerous child pornography violator, the members of the raid team came under gunfire, resulting in the death of Detective Fatta and the serious wounding of Detective Cedeno. The team members responded selflessly and heroically to disarm the assailant and bring him to justice.

Secretary's Award for Exemplary Service

Robert Allmon, Deportation Assistant, Office of Detention and Removal Operations (Chicago)

Mr. Allmon has gone above and beyond in his duties as deportation assistant – setting policies, improving processes, providing outstanding service and contributing immensely to the efficiency and integrity of the Chicago DRO office. In addition, he volunteered his services for a 45-day stint with Operation ICE Storm, a special program targeting violent human smuggling networks in Arizona.

Additional information on all of the ICE honorees is available through the ICE Office of Public Affairs at (202) 514-2648.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).